

Message Text

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16

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 OMB-01 IO-14 NIC-01 SAJ-01 DRC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 /130 W

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R 030847Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1433

INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

USINT DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 0382

KUWAIT PASS DOHA AND MUSCAT; BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

EO 11652: ADS (DECONTROL APRIL 1, 1976)

TAGS: PFOR, TC, UR

SUBJECT: VISIT OF SOVIET MUSLIM DELEGATION

1. ISLAMIC DELEGATION FROM CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS OF THE SOVIET UNION HEADED BY THE MUFTI, SHAIKH MUHAMMAD DIA KHAN AND ACCOMPANIED BY SHAIKH ABUDUL GHANI, CHIEF EDITOR OF ONLY ISLAMIC MAGAZINE IN USSR AND SAYYED A'DHAM AKBAR ALI, DIRECTOR OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS FOR MUSLIMS IN USSR AND ASSISTANT TO THE MUFTI VISITED THE UAE DURING THE PAST WEEK.

2. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, THE MUFTI CONVEYED GREETINGS OF SOVIET CENTRAL ASIAN MUSLIMS TO PRES SHAIKH ZAYID AND CHIEF OF ISLAMIC LEGISLATION OF ABU DHABI, SHAIKH ABDUL AZIZ MUBARAK, AND
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NUMBER OF SENIOR GOVT OFFICIALS WELCOMED THE SOVIET ISLAMIC DELEGA-

TION, THE FIRST OF ITS KIND EVER TO BE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE UAE. BOTH IN STATEMENT TO AHSIKH ZAYID AND AT A PRESS CONFERENCE BEFORE DEPARTING SHAIKH MUHAMMAD DIA DESCRIBED CONDITIONS IN WHICH SOVIET MUSLIMS LIVE UNDER THE PRESENT REGIME. SOV MUSLIMS, HE STATED,

ARE LIVING IN COMPLETE HARMONY WITH OTHER SOV PEOPLES ON THEIR COUNTRY. THEY RETAIN THEIR OWN LANGUAGES AND CUSTOMS, AND ALSO ENJOY ALL OTHER PRIVILEGES AS OTHER SOV CITIZENS, IN SHORT THE MUFTI WAS QUOTED AS SAYING, WE LIVE AS ONE FAMILY.

3. COMMENT: UNDERSTAND UAEG ALLOWED SOV MUFTI TO ENTER ONLY BECAUSE HE AND HIS DELEGATION WERE COMING FROM SAUDI ARABIA, ACCORDING MFA SOURCE, MUFTA HIMSELF HAD AT LEAST A CONVINCING FACADE AS A RELIGIOUS MAN, BUT OTHER TWO MEMBERS OF DELEGATION OBVIOUSLY WERE ALONG ON

TRIP FOR PURPOSES OTHER THAN PROMOTING ISLAM. BRIT AMB MCCARTHY TOLD ME THAT HE COULD NOT RESIST TEMPTATION TO CHIDE UAE MIN STATE FOR FOR-

EIGN AFFAIRS SAIF GUBASH, (WHO DID GRAD WORK AT LENINGRAD UNIV), ABOUT

BONA FIDES OF ANY SOV CHURCHMEN ALLOWED TRAVEL ABROAD. MCCARTHY PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF CONSIDERABLE MEDIA TIME GIVEN MUFTI'S STATEMENTS ABOUT FREEDOM OF RELIGION IN USSR. HE REMINDED GHUBASH OF EARLIER INCIDENT HE PERSONALLY AWARE OF IN EGYPT WHEN SOV ISLAMIC VISITOR TURNED OUT TO BE RANKING MEMBER OF KGB. GHUBASH FORCED ADMIT UAEG EXTREMELY WARY OF MUFTI'S VISIT AND HE PERSONALLY COULD NOT ACCEPT PR LINE MUFTI WAS PEDDLING IN GULF ABOUT FREEDOM OF RELIGION IN USSR. AS INTERESTING ASIDE, GHUBASH'S RUSSIAN-BORN WIFE, REPORTEDLY REFUSED TO EVEN BE INTRODUCED TO MUFTI, NOT FOR ANY POLITICAL REASONS, BUT BECAUSE AS PURE-BRED RUSSIAN FROM NOVOGRAD REGION, SHE APPARENTLY DISINCLINED ACCORD MUFTI, WHO OF TARTAR ORIGIN, STATUS AS FIRST CLASS SOVIET CITIZEN. GRIFFIN

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